

THE
HUMBLE
PETITION

of Mr. Prynne, late
exile, and close Pri-
soner in the Ile of Jersey.

Presented

TO THE
HONORABLE
The Knights, Citizens
and Burgesſes, of the
Commons Houſe of
Parliament.



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*The humble Petition of William
 Prynne, late exile and cloſe Priſoner
 in the Ile of Jerſey.*

In all humbleneſſe ſheweth;



That your Petitioner, though not
 conſcientious to himſelfe of a-
 ny voluntary or apparant of-
 fence againſt the Lawes of the
 Realme (to which he ever ſtudied
 to conſorme himſelfe) through the maliciouſ
 practices and perſecutions of ſome *Prelates and*
Church-men (eſpecially the now *Arch-Biſhop of*
Canterbury, and *Peter Heylin, Doctor in Divinity*)
 whole errors and innovations, contrary to the
 Doctrin & diſciplin of the Church of England,
 & extravagancies, in the *High Comiſſion* & other

Ecclesiasticall Courts, your Petitioner for his owne reliefe, being there uniuersally prosecuted (had to his worke power oppugned) hath within eight yeares last past, undergone two heavy Censures in the Starre-Chamber Court.

The first upon an Information there exhibited against your Petitioner, by Mr. *Noy*, deceased, then Attorney Generall, for some misconstrued passages, inoffensive in themselves, and in your Petitioners true intention, being for the most part the words of other approved Authours, comprised in a Booke, *titled Histrio-mastix*, written by the Petitioner, against common Interludes, and lycensed for the Presse by *M. Thomas Backner*, household Chaplaine to the then Arch-Bishop of *Canterbury*, authorized by the State to lycense Bookes, and by him exactly perused and approved both in the written and Printed Copy, before its publication, and so confessed in the Information; for which authourized Booke and passages, your Petitioner before the hearing of the cause, was not onely imprisoned in the Tower of London without Baile of Manuprise, for a whole yeares space, denyed accessse to his Counsell, convenient time to examine witnesses, and make Breviats to instruct his Counsell (the information being Generall, and reciting no particular Clauses of the Booke excepted against) this exhibits, the onely meanes of his defence,
 Illegally

Illegally suppressed: Some of his Countell Tampered with to make no Iustification, contrary to your Petitioners instructions, and desire, whereby his cause was miscarried: But also at the Hearing, by reason of those malicious and perverse glosses on the said passages, which the said *Heylin* had collected and presented to his Maiesties learned Countsell, who repeated his Instructions onely; your Petitioner was fined 3000^l. to his Maiefty, expelled the Vniversity of *Oxford*, and *Lincolnes-Inne*, degraded from his profession of the Law, wherein hee never offended, Set in the Pillory in the Pallace-yard at *Westminster*, where he lost one of his Eares; And two dayes after on the Pillory in *Cheapside*, where he lost the other Eare, and had his said Lyncensed Bookes there publicly burnt before his face, by the *Hang-man*, in a most disgracefull manner; and aiudged after to remaine a prisoner during his life.

That after the said censure, to defame and iniure your Petitioner the more, hee was charged wrongfully in the Decree, as censured for Periury, (though not taxed for it by the Court) and betweene his sufferings in the Pillory, the Bookes of his Study (twice surveyed, and restored to him by order from the Lords) before any (fine estreated) by a warrant out of the High-Commission signed by the said Arch-Bishop & others, were seised by on *Crosse* a messenger, who carried them to his house, with which

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your Petitioner charging the said Arch-Bishop upon occasion, in the open Court of Star-chamber; hee there publicly disavowed the same (though your Petitioner can yet produce it under his owne hand) promising withall, that the Books should be restored forthwith; which notwithstanding were all still detained by his meanes, till they were extended and sold for your Petitioners Fyne: Who shortly after by an order out of the said Court, sent to the Tower to bee executed, was there shut up close prisoner, and *Doctor Rheeves* sent thither to search his Chamber for the Pamphlet, which the said Arch-Bishop would wrongfully have Fathered upon your Petitioner, whose friends have beene unjustly prosecuted in the Exchequer, and elsewhere sundry yeares, for his Fine aforesaid.

And your Petitioner further saith, that about *Easter* was three yeares, during his imprisonment in the Tower, by meanes of the said Arch-Bishop, a new information was exhibited in the said Court against your Petitioner, and others, with certaine Bookes thereto annexed; *Deuying the Prelats Iurisdiction over other Ministers, to be Iure-divino. Charging them with many errors and Innovations in Religion, Usurpation upon his Maiesties Prerogative, and Subjects liberty; Abuse, and extortions in the High-Commission, And other Ecclesiasticall Courts, suppressing Preaching, And painfull Ministers without a cause; Lycensing Popish, Arminian, and other*
Errone-

Erroneus Bookes against the Sabbath, setting up Altars, Images and Crucifixes, Removing and Rayling in Communion Tables, and bowing downe to them, Altering the Booke of Common Prayer, The Bookes for the Gunpowder Treason, And late Fast in some Materiall passages in favour of Popery and Papists.

Which thing (though very notorious, and oft complained against by this Honourable House, in former und late Parliaments) were yet reputed Scandalous. And though neither of the said Bookes was peticularly charged on your Petitioner, in the said Information, nor any witnessse produced to prove him either Author or disperse of any of them, yet by denying your Petitioner liberty to draw up his owne Answer, (though once a Barister at Law) when as his assigned Counsell refused to doe it, by close Imprisoning your Petitioner, and his Servant; by debarring him Pen, Inke, and Paper, whereby to Answer, or instruct his Counsell, searching his chamber, and taking away part of his Answer there found, denying him Acceffe to his Counsell, and conference with his Co-defendants, even at Counsell, though jointly charged with him, Rejecting the Crosse Bill exhibited by him for his defence; threatening *Master Holt*, one of your Petitioners assigned Councell, sent by the then *Lord Keeper* to the Tower, to draw up your Petitioners Answer, and commanding him not to signe it, after it was engrossed: Whereupon
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he refused to subscribe it, contrary to his promise to your Petitioner, and by refusing to accept your Petitioners Answers to the said Information, signed with his owne, and *Master Tomlins*, the other of his Counsell's hands, though tendred by your Petitioner, both at the Star-chamber Office, and in the open Court at the hearing the sayd Information, for default of Answer, (though two Answers were there-to tendred by your Petitioner) was taken *Pro confesso* against your Petitioner, and he thereupon *Fined five thousand pounds to his Majesty, Pillor'd, Stigmatized on both cheekes, Mutilated and dismembered, in a most Barbarous manner, and the small remainder of his Eares, left after his first execution, cut off, to the hazard of his hearing, and life, Adjudged to perpetuall close imprisonment in the Gaole of Carnarvan castle in North-wales, a Nasty Dog-hole, farre remote from your Petitioners Friends.* Which sentence was unduly drawne up and executed upon your Petitioner, as his Attorneys Clerke informed him, before it was entred into the Booke, or your Petitioner could get any Copie of it, to except against the same, as hee had iust cause.

That immediately after the execution of the same sentence, your Petitioner sent to the sayd Arch-Bishopp to desire him to release, or Bayle his servant (who was detained close prisoner for ten weekes space in the messengers hands, and oft examined and solicited by faire promises, and threatnings causlessly to accuse your
 Petition-

Petitioner, against whom they wanted evidence) that so hee might attend him during his soares, which the said *Arch-Bishop* out of his *Grace* and *Charity*, utterly refused: saying that hee intended to proceed against his said servant in the *High Commission*, where he hath ever since vexed, censured and banded him from Prison to Prison, onely for refusing to accuse and betray your Petitioner.

That after the said heavy sentence, your Petitioner by an order in the said Court, (by way of addition to the said Censure) was inhibited the use of Pen, Inke and Paper, and all Bookes, except the Bible, and the Booke of Common-Prayer, and some few Bookes for private Devotion, and before his wounds were perfectly cured, he was by order removed from the Tower to *Carnarvan*; and some of his friends in *Chester*, who visited him there in his passage, in the presence of his Conductors, who had no order to restraine any person from resorting to him, were for this very cause sent for by a Messenger, to appeare before the Lords of the Privy Counsell, and likewise cited into the High-Commission at *Yorke*, where they were imprisoned, and fined, to the ruine of their estates, enjoyned to make a publique *Recantation* in the Cathedrall Church, and in the Towne-Hall of *Chester*. The said Commissioners further decreeing that three pictures of your Petitioners found in *Chester*, should bee publikely burnt at the high Crosse there, which was done accordingly.

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That

That your Petitioner since his said sentence, hath beene publikely reviled at, and libelled against, both by the High Commissioners at *York*, and in sundry Churches, both at *Chester*, and else where, and in divers licensed printed bookes compiled by the said *Heylin*, and published by the *Arch-Bishops* privity or command, and that sundry of his friends houses, studies, Bookes, and writings have beene violently broken up, ransacked and taken away, and themselves prosecuted in the High Commission, out of malice, for the relation they had to your Petitioner.

That after your Petitioner had continued some ten weeks space close prisoner in *Carnarvan*, he was about three years since by a warrant from the Lords of the Counsell, made in the summer vacation (to which the said *Arch Bishops* hand was first subscrib'd) ordered by way of Exile, to be imbarqued and transported with all privacy into one of the Castles in the Isle of *Iersey*, and his conductors thereby charged not to admit any person whatsoever, but themselves onely, to speak with your Petitioner in his passage: whereupon after some injuries there received by *Mr. Griffith*, the Kings Attorney in those parts (who endeavoured to seize upon the furniture of his chamber for his owne use) your Petitioner was imbarqued amongst Papists, in a bruised ship-wrackt vessell, full of leakes, and after foureteene weekes voyage in the Winter season, through dangerous stormes and seas, which spoyled most of his stufte and bedding, and threatning often ship-

Ship-wrack to him, he arrived at the said Isle, and was conveyed close prisoner into *Mount Orgate Castle*, there where the Lieutenant Governour by another extrajudiciall Order, to which the sayd Arch-Bishops name was first ordered, to keepe your Petitioner close prisoner in a chamber, suffer none but his keepers to speake with him, to intercept all letters to him; to permit him neither Pen, Inke nor Paper, either to write to his friends for necessaries, or to petition for reliefe, and to permit him no Booke but the Bible, and those aforesaid bookes, without giving any order for his dyet there, so that beeing deprived of his calling and estate, exiled and shut up close prisoner among strangers, remote from all his friends, denyed all adresse to him by person or letters, hee had certainly perished in his almost three years close imprisonment there, had not the extraordinary providence and goodnesse of God (which he shall ever adore) & the noble charity of those, under whose custody he did remaine, furnished him with such dyet and necessaries, as preserved him both in health and life, in this his close imprisonment and exile.

May it therefore please this Honourable House, to take these your Petitioners almost eight yeares tragicall grievances, of new and dangerous example, into your most sad and just considerations, that so they may not become presidents to the prejudice of posterity; to grant him liberty to send for, and examine

all necessary witnesses : to order all Clerks, Registers, and other officers of the Star-Chamber, or elsewhere, speedily and freely to grant him the copies of such orders, decrees and writings, as his cause shall require, to release him upon Bale, (being now but a prisoner upon an extrajudiciall order of the Lords, and not by vertue of any sentence or decree in Court) to grant him liberty to plead and prosecute his owne cause, since Counsell hath so often failed him, and to give him such satisfaction and reliefe as the justice and equity of his cause shall merit.

And your Petitioner shall

ever pray for you safeties,

WILLIAM PRYNNE.



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